

Document No.

NO CHANGE in Class. ☐

DECLASSIFIED

Class. CHANGED TO: TS

DDA Memo, 4 Apr 77

Auth: DDA REG. 77/1763

Date: 20 MAR 1978

COUNTRY Italy

CENTRAL INTELLIGENCE GROUP
INTELLIGENCE REPORT

DATE: 25X1A

INFO. [REDACTED]

SUBJECT Political Situation in the South Tirol

DIST. 6 December 1946

25X1A6a

PAGES 4

SUPPLEMENT

This document is hereby regraded to
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letter of 16 October 1978 from the
Director, Central Intelligence Agency.

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SOURCE

I. Attitude of the Population of the South Tirol

1. The mood of the South Tiroleans has reportedly changed little during the past month, although it is believed that the series of meetings held by the South Tirolean delegates to Paris (Drs. Volgger and von Guggenberg) throughout the Province probably served to raise the morale and to allay criticism of the Paris Agreement.
2. However, with the possible exception of the resignation from the Prefecture of Dr. Innocenti there are no signs that the Paris Agreement is being implemented and for this reason the population is said to be growing increasingly impatient and skeptical.
3. The SVP is being widely criticized for its weakness and lack of energy and in some circles the leaders are being attacked as "irresponsible business men, more concerned with their own pockets than with the welfare of the South Tiroleans as a whole," and there is talk among the more youthful elements of rejecting the Paris Agreement and returning to the original demand for self-determination.
4. In addition, mistrust of the Italians is increasing daily as incidents occur indicating that there is no change in Italian methods.

II. Policy of the SVP Leaders

1. The SVP leaders apparently continue to place great confidence in the prospects offered by the Paris Agreement. All possible steps are being taken to hasten its implementation; but it is realized that only preparatory work is feasible until the Peace Treaty is finally signed, and Austrian Foreign Minister Dr. Gruber has returned from his visit to the United States.

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2. Talks between Erich Armon, Drs. Raffeiner and Volgger, and Dr. Innocenti have not served to increase the faith of the SVP leaders in Italian goodwill. In particular, Innocenti persists in (a) his interpretation of the Paris Agreement as providing for a joint autonomy between South Tirol and Trentino, (b) his intransigent attitude concerning the replacement of Italian officials by South Tiroleans, and (c) his refusal to discuss a more favorable settlement of the Optants Question than that contained in the draft decree elaborated by the Mixed Commission in South Tirol. The SVP leaders are further disturbed by the fact that Italian emigration to South Tirol is continuing, although on a reduced scale, and by numerous minor incidents indicating that the Italian attitude toward the South Tiroleans has changed little.
3. Despite these negative indications, however, the SVP leaders still hope that the Italians will be compelled (by Gruber and the Western Powers) to carry out loyally their side of the bargain. There is apparently no talk as yet of the probable failure of the Paris solution. On the contrary, a certain resentment is felt toward Austria, and the North Tirol in particular for the defeatist sentiments prevailing there. Statements from responsible Austrian leaders that Austria has not relinquished her claim to the South Tirol are considered premature, and likely to endanger the final ratification of the Paris Agreement by the Four Foreign Ministers. (In this connection Innocenti recently warned Volgger of the "great disservice" which Gruber and Figl had rendered their country by their statements that Austria had not given up its claim to South Tirol.) A very definite malaise exists between South and North Tirol, as the result of their different attitudes to the Paris Agreement. This finds practical expression in an almost complete severance of contacts between Bolzano and Innsbruck. When it was pointed out to Volgger that this state of affairs was regrettable, Volgger replied: "The North Tiroleans should help us instead of making things more difficult for us by their defeatist attitude."

III. SVP Memorandum for De Gasperi

1. Recently the SVP asked Italian Prime Minister De Gasperi to grant an audience to two of its representatives, so that they might discuss practical steps for the application of the Paris Agreement. De Gasperi replied that at the moment he was too overburdened with work, but told the SVP that in the meanwhile they could discuss their proposals freely with Innocenti. The SVP leaders interpret this as an indication that De Gasperi does not wish to talk to them until he knows more about their aspirations.

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2. On 31 October the "Action Committee" of the SVP met to consider De Gasperi's reply. It was decided to draw up a memorandum, embodying their most pressing demands (Optants Question, etc.) and indicating their ideas as to the implementation of the Paris Agreement (draft autonomy statute, etc.), and to forward copies of this memorandum to De Gasperi and Innocenti.

IV. Democratization of the SVP.

1. Steps are being taken by the SVP to hold elections for local SVP officials throughout the Province. It is hoped that these elections can be held in time to allow for a Delegates Conference at the end of November, at which the Central Direction of the Party and the Chief Officers will be elected.

V. Financing of the SVP

1. One of the main methods of financing the SVP has been by means of a compensation business with North Tirol. The South Tirolean wine merchant Frindolin Mayr of Tramin has been buying cattle in North Tirol against deliveries of wine, fruit, etc., and handing over a substantial proportion of the profits of this business to the SVP. The Tirolean Food Minister, Landesrat Muigg, is reported to have carried on this compensation business with the full consent of Vienna. He admitted, however, that the terms of the business were not as favorable to North Tirol as they might have been, but that he had overlooked this fact on the grounds that the SVP reaped the benefit. Recently a great part of Mayr's wine deliveries to Innsbruck turned out to be vinegar. As a result Muigg has lost all confidence in Mayr and refuses to do further business with him. Muigg believes that Mayr is dishonest, and has only been turning over a small percentage of his profits to the SVP. Muigg estimated Mayr's profits at between two and three million lire. Volgger is reported to have stated that Mayr has handed over about one and one-half million lire to the SVP.

VI. South Tirolean Prisoners of War

1. The SVP leaders are concerned over the fate of some forty to fifty South Tirolean prisoners of war who, following their release by the Allies, were interned by the Italians in a camp at Possili. Conditions in this camp are described as "dreadful". The South Tiroleans reportedly are herded together with thieves and other common criminals.
2. The Italians allegedly assert that as the prisoners opted for Germany under the Hitler-Mussolini agreement, they are to be regarded as Germans, and refuse to allow them to return to their homes and families in the South Tirol.

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3. The Austrian Government will apparently not take action in this matter, so that there is no official authority to take up the case of these prisoners.

VII. Dr. Schöffel's Proposed Appointment

1. The SVP have sent an official request to Dr. Gruber that Dr. Schöffel be appointed to the Austrian Legation at Rome as an expert on South Tirolean questions. 25X1A6a
Comment: Dr. Schöffel was the special envoy of the Bishop of Bressanone, who accompanied the South Tirolean Delegates to Paris. He is an Austrian subject, who lives in Bressanone.)
2. Gruber is reported to have stated recently that he had been favorably impressed by Schöffel in Paris, and that he hoped to find a post for him in the foreign service. Schöffel, however, is somewhat skeptical about the idea. He is thought to believe that he could serve South Tirol more usefully by remaining in Bressanone, and giving his moral support to the SVP leaders. Schöffel belongs to the nationalistic Church circles, who are so concerned at developments in Bolzano. He argues that if he goes to Rome there will be one less to give courage and strength to the SVP.

VIII. New Daily Newspaper

1. A new daily newspaper, the Bozner Zeitung, has just made its appearance in South Tirol.
2. Originally this newspaper was planned by a group of German and Austrian Nazis, who had taken refuge in the South Tirol and suggested to the Italians that they would bring out a pro-Italian German-language paper in return for assurances of continued Italian hospitality. Among the persons who have belonged to this group are:

Herr Barcatta,	formerly of the Neue Freie Presse,
Luís Trenker,	the film star,
Herr Bauer,	former DNB correspondent in Milan,
Dr. Kircher,	former editor of the Frankfurter Zeitung,
Rabinelli,	a lawyer from South Tirol
Dr. Führeß,	from South Tirol
Dr. Eberhardt,	from South Tirol
Dr. Fraas,	from South Tirol.
3. However, since after endless negotiating, this German-Austrian group was unable to find the necessary capital for the newspaper, the Italians have now stepped in and taken over the newspaper themselves. The Bozner Zeitung is financed and run solely by the Italians, with whom it seems Herr Bauer, Dr. Eberhardt and Dr. Fraas have agreed to co-operate.

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